

REMARKS

With the above amendments, claims 7, 10, 12, and 15 have been amended and claims 11 and 17 have been canceled. Claims 7, 8, 10, 12, 15, and 16 are pending and ready for further action on the merits. No new matter has been added by way of the above amendments.

Reconsideration is respectfully requested in light of the following remarks.

Hutcheson '024

Upon testing a composition disclosed in Hutcheson '024 (US Patent No. 5,296,024) a reference that had been previously considered by the Examiner and initialed on an Information Disclosure Statement 1449 form filed on January 2, 2003, Applicants have discovered that this composition might affect the patentability of the instant invention under 35 USC §102. Accordingly, Applicants have amended the claims so as to obviate this composition. Should the Examiner need further information regarding these tests, the Examiner is invited to request such information from Applicants at the number indicated below.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact T. Benjamin Schroeder (Reg. No. 50,990) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview

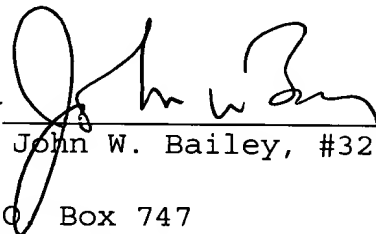
in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

By



John W. Bailey, #32,881

BS
JWB/TBS/mua
0425-0754P

P.O. Box 747
Falls Church, VA 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000

Attachment(s)

(Rev. 02/12/2004)